

Summary of the Michigan Open Meetings Act 1976 PA 267

The basic intent of the Michigan Open Meetings Act is to strengthen the right of all Michigan citizens to know what goes on in government by requiring public bodies to conduct nearly all business at open meetings.

The concept of the Open Meetings Act is: as a public body, a board, commission or council must do all its business, except for certain narrowly defined exceptions, in public meetings at which a quorum is present. Meetings must be held in public places. The public must be told in advance the time and location of the meeting and be given an opportunity to address the public body. Minutes must be taken at the meeting and be made available to the public upon request within a short time after the meeting.

Coverage

The coverage of the law is very broad, including the State Legislature as well as the legislative or governing bodies of all cities, villages, townships, charter townships and all county units of government.

The act does not apply to a meeting of a public body which is a social or chance gathering not designed to avoid the law.

Notification of meetings

The law states that within 10 days of the first meeting of a public body in each calendar or fiscal year, the body must publicly post a list stating the dates, times and places of all its regular meetings at its principal office. If there is a change in schedule, within three days of the meeting in which the change is made, the public body must post a notice stating the new dates, times and places of regular meetings.

Special and irregular meetings

For special and irregular meetings, public bodies must post a notice indicating the date, time and place at least 18 hours before the meetings.

Closed meetings

The law provides for closed meetings in a few specified circumstances. In order for a public body to hold a closed meeting, two-thirds of its members must vote affirmatively in a roll call. Also, the purpose for which the closed meeting is being called must be stated in the meeting when the roll call is taken. Normally, Neighborhood Planning Councils should not have cause to go into a closed session.

Individual notification of meetings by mail

Citizens can request that public bodies put them on a mailing list so that they are notified in advance of all meetings. In addition, upon written request, public bodies are required to send free notices of meetings to newspapers, radio and television stations at the same time that they are required to post those notices.

Minutes of a meeting

Minutes must be kept for all meetings and are required to contain:

- a statement of the time, date and place of the meeting;
- the members present as well as absent;
- a record of any decisions made at the meeting and a record of all roll call votes; and
- an explanation of the purpose(s) if the meeting is a closed session.

Except for minutes taken during a closed session, all minutes are considered public records, open for public inspection, and must be available for review as well as copying at the address designated on the public notice for the meeting.

Proposed minutes must be available for public inspection within eight business days after a meeting. Approved minutes must be available within five business days after the meeting at which they were approved.

Corrections in the minutes must be made no later than the next meeting after the meeting to which the minutes refer. Corrected minutes must be available no later than the next meeting after the correction and must show both the original entry and the correction.

This edited summary is from

The Michigan Municipal League